

Study of a Young Collector

Curated by Patrick Monahan & Helen Allen



EXHIBITORS:

Abbott & Holder
Colnaghi
Curious Objects
Dominic Fine Art
Harry Gready
Karma Gallery
La Gabrielle Fine Arts SA
Moderne Gallery
Philip Mould & Company
Myers & Monroe
R & Company
Walker Decorative Arts

Gerda Wegener *Portrait of Lili Elbe as a Spaniard*, Courtesy of Harry Gready

Booth A14

STUDY OF A YOUNG COLLECTOR

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A Regency-era “sorcerer’s mirror” hangs near the entrance to *Study of a Young Collector*, an exhibition curated by writer and art advisor Patrick Monahan alongside The Winter Show’s Executive Director, Helen Allen. “The title is a bit of a double-entendre,” Monahan explains. “It’s a physical study, representing a room in some one’s home, but also a character study of an anonymous art collector.”

A glance in the mirror reveals just who that collector is. *Study* is The Winter Show’s first-ever exhibition both by and for young tastemakers. Assembling a freshly imaginative selection of art, furniture, and objects from 11 promising international dealers who have never before exhibited at the Show, it highlights crosscurrents across time and space that speak to the bold taste of the newest generation of collectors. Monahan is accustomed to abolishing the boundaries between genres and time periods in his role as art advisor, through which he consults with museums and collectors on artworks from antiquity to the present, and as a writer on contemporary culture for magazines such as *Vanity Fair*, *Country Life*, and *Air Mail*. “Visitors may enter the *Study* looking for the imaginary collector,” he says. “Hopefully, however, they will find something more about themselves.”

Here, Monahan and Allen delve into their process of imagining the exhibition and explain what young collectors might discover.



English Sorcerer's Mirror
English Regency period
c. 1815-20
Courtesy of
Myers & Monroe

The Winter Show: How did the idea for the *Study* first come about?

Patrick Monahan: Last summer, Helen and I started talking about young collectors and dealers, while in London during the art weeks. Helen had been looking for ways to represent both groups at The Winter Show, so we decided to bring them together in a way that had never been done before. As a writer, I was eager to tell a story, rather than just hang works of art on the wall. We began to picture an intimate space where a young collector could admire their favorite treasures. Before we knew it, the *Study* was born!

How do you envision your young collector?

PM: It’s funny, I imagined the collection before the person. The first works which came to mind were ceramics by Puerto Rican artist Roberto Lugo, which resemble ancient Greek pots but depict scenes from contemporary urban life. I could see them exhibited next to real classical examples, and considered what type of collector might display them together – perhaps a 21st-century *Grand Tourist*, who’s been around the world and brought the best of it back home, including traditional *Grand Tourist* objects such as Italian *rosso antico* obelisks and also a bronze death mask of Nietzsche, which we have on view. Though the premise was fluid, the place was set in our minds: Helen and I are both born New Yorkers, so we knew exactly where our collector lived.

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Previous page:

Gerda Wegener (1885-1940)
Portrait of Lili Elbe as a Spaniard,
 C. 1920-1925
 Watercolour and gouache on paper
 Courtesy of Harry Gready

Curt Stoeving (1863-1939)
Friedrich Nietzsche Death Mask, c. 1900
 Bronze
 Courtesy of Dominic Fine Art

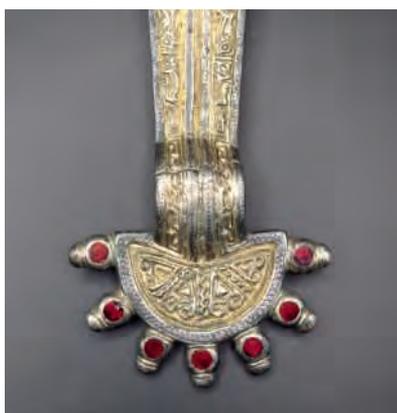
Roberto Lugo
Central Park, from the *Orange and Black* series, 2023
 Glazed stoneware
 Courtesy of R & Company

This page, clockwise from left:

Mira Nakashima (b. 1942)
Exceptional Custom Desk, 1998
 Carpathian elm burl, American black walnut
 Courtesy of Moderne Gallery

Book of Hours
 Bruges, c. 1460
 Courtesy of La Gabrielle Fine Arts SA

Merovingian Fibula
 France or Germany, c. 700
 Silver and silver-gilt, set with seven garnets
 Courtesy of Curious Objects



What should visitors notice throughout the room?

PM: Well, since it's a study, there should be an important desk. In this case, we have one created in Carpathian elm by the American architect/furniture maker Mira Nakashima. Behind it, there's a portrait of a gentleman clad in a crimson cloak by 17th-century artist Mary Beale. Visitors can imagine the collector inside the *Study*, a person who would leaf through illuminated manuscripts such as the c. 1460 Book of Hours on the desk or admire an 11th-century silver coffer on a nearby shelf.

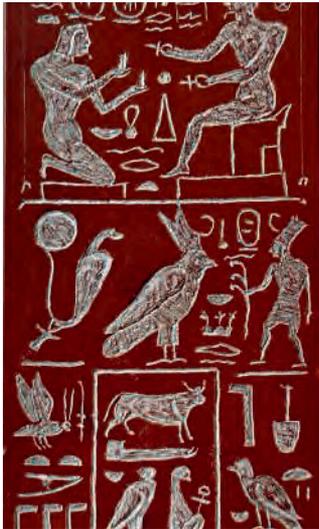
So what else does this eclectic collector pursue?

PM: A lot! As with many of collectors, the *Study* has several "mini collections," or organizing themes within the larger whole. One centers on historic gay and transgender art; others highlight medieval objects, such as a Merovingian loop fibula (from the sixth century) and the Book of Hours mentioned previously, as well as antiquities (and artworks influenced by them) such as a Roman amphora and a corresponding contemporary interpretation by Roberto Lugo.

Do you think young collectors collect differently from previous generations?

PM: Young collectors are more willing to collect across traditional categories than earlier generations. They may focus on women artists or on printmaking, which allows them to embrace art from different periods and places. For instance, a collector of women artists might enjoy portraits by both contemporary American painter Jennifer Packer and Italian Renaissance artist Sofonisba Anguissola. I also find that young collectors today are as interested in the stories surrounding works as they are in the works themselves.

Helen Allen: As Patrick said, young collectors are motivated both by the visually compelling nature of the artworks as well as the extraordinary stories behind them. Regarding the theme of LGBT art, for example, we've selected three important works by or depicting Lili Elbe (born Einar Wegener, most notably, a portrait by Elbe's partner, Gerda Wegener. Elbe transitioned in the 1920s – her remarkable life was later brought to wider public attention in the 2015 film, *The Danish Girl*. Also featured is a series of drawings by Brian Stonehouse, a World War II spy who was imprisoned in



Clockwise from top left:
Rosso antico models of the Flaminian and Lateran Obelisks (detail), Rome, c.1830-50
Courtesy of Walker Decorative Arts

Brian Stonehouse M.B.E. (1918-1998)
Modelling a Brown Checked Suit, c. 1960
Charcoal, watercolour and gouache
Courtesy of Abbott & Holder

Attributed to the Tyszkiewicz Painter
Red-figure amphora (Type C)
Greek, Attic, terracotta, c. 480 B.C.
Courtesy of Colnaghi



Above:
Mary Beale (1633-1699)
Portrait of a Gentleman, 1670s
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Philip Mould & Company

multiple camps, including Dachau. Stonehouse survived by sketching portraits for his captors before being liberated by U.S. troops in April 1945. After being freed, he moved to New York, was American *Vogue's* first new illustrator hired since the war, and rose to become a defining figure in the Golden Age of fashion illustration.

Is there any advice you would give a young collector, or really any collector who's just starting out?

PM: For anyone beginning to collect, the most important advice is to focus on what you genuinely, personally love – objects that you can't stop thinking about, not what happens to be trending or highly visible at the moment. Buying what everyone else is buying is often more expensive than it should be, and ultimately less satisfying; a collection built on instinct and curiosity will always feel more meaningful and authentic.

HA: It is also important to approach collecting with confidence and openness. Art fairs are actually a wonderful place to discover and engage. Don't be intimidated – ask questions, ask about prices, ask about history and condition. Dealers, curators, and gallerists expect and welcome these conversations, and learning is part of the pleasure of collecting. Over time, those questions sharpen your eye, deepen your knowledge, and help you build a collection that truly reflects your taste rather than anyone else's.

What do you hope visitors take away from the *Study*?

PM: The whole premise of this exhibition is to illustrate how one can live comfortably with classic art and integrate it into a modern, livable aesthetic. If you love and connect with the works you own, your home will never feel like a museum – on the contrary, it will feel like a special, private gallery you can enjoy at any time of day or night. To me, that's the greatest luxury!

Patrick Monahan is a writer and an independent art advisor to museums and private collectors. He contributes regularly to *Vanity Fair*, *Country Life*, *Air Mail*, and *The Paris Review*, and advises the Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico. He holds degrees from the University of Chicago and Cambridge University, both in art history.